THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) The Income Tax Department does not maintain separate details of Income Tax dues in respect of categories such as corporate houses, industrialists, film artists, etc.

(b) The number of taxpayers as on 31.3.2003 are 331.49 lakhs.

(c) It is the constant endeavour of the Government to bring more and more people into the fold of Income Tax net. Several measures initiated to widen the tax base include:

(i) Introduction of one-by-six scheme.

(ii) Compulsory quoting of Permanent Account Number in certain high value transactions.

(iii) Carrying out surveys and searches on a selective basis.

(iv) Extending the applicability to TDS provisions to cover various financial activities.

(v) Efforts to educate the taxpayers by holding camps in different areas.

A comprehensive computerization programme has further been undertaken to bring all the 501 Income Tax Offices throughout the country under an All India computerized network. A Tax Information Network (TIN) is also being put in place to ensure that a person carrying out any business activity/financial transaction would fall within the tax net.

Circulation of fake currency notes

956. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that fake currency notes of Rs. 500/- and Rs. 1000/- are being printed in Nepal and are in circulation in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the matter was taken up with the Government of Nepal and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) whether Government propose to replace the image of Ashoka pillars with that of Mahatma Gandhi in all currency notes so as to detect fake notes and if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Government of India is aware and concerned about the circulation of fake Indian currency in Nepal and in the country.

(c) Yes, Sir. Both the countries have agreed to jontly coordinate measures to prevent misuse of the open India Nepal border for activities directed against India including the menace of fake Indian currency notes. The Govt. of Nepal has assured that their territory would not be used for activities inimical to India's interests.

(d) Notes with the portraits of Mahatma Gandhi on the obverse of the notes and also in the watermark window are being issued since 1996, as a security feature against counterfeiting. All these notes also carry an Ashoka Pillar emblem printed on the obverse side.

Growing menace of economic crimes

957. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the action taken to deal firmly with the growing menace of economic crimes, serious fraud cases and large crimes involving finance and drugs with possible connections to organised crime or terrorism prevailing in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): The Ministry of Finance has various investigative agencies to deal firmly with the growing menace of economic crimes, serious fraud cases, etc. These agencies undertake search/seizure/survey operations relating to tax evasions, make efforts to curb smuggling activities, conduct investigations into cases of violation of provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, etc. Several steps have also been taken to combat drug trafficking like enactment of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, identification of major drug syndicates, international cooperation including regional and bilateral agreements, etc.